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"An Independent Newspaper, The Organ of No Clique or Party"

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Convenience and Necessity

FRANCHISES for street transportation are usually discussed in terms of public convenience and necessity, indicating the standard of service which a community desires in return for the privilege of using its streets. That there are other necessities in the matter, however, has been becoming clearer in the Greater Victoria region for some time. No utility concern, however powerful, can be expected to supply community service increasingly out of its own pocket. While one may think of current problems of bus operation here as a passing phase in a rapidly growing community, there are some root difficulties which cannot be so regarded. These call for attention.

When the British Columbia Electric Company secured renewal of its street franchise some years ago Victoria and its environs did not have 45,000 privately-owned automobiles. The fares, then at seven cents or less, encouraged more patrons to use the buses that does a tariff now nearly twice that figure. Traffic management, and the costly means of promoting it, was in an incipient stage then compared with what it is now. Many other factors have altered in the same interval; including excise and other advancing taxes on rolling equipment, numbers employed, wage rates and so forth. So a means of periodical review necessarily was included in the franchise agreement, beginning with direct municipal attention.

From a community standpoint, it is still a case of public convenience and necessity. There is no point, however, in bickering over a degree of service that cannot be given in the light of today's economics. The present franchise holders have already tried increasing fares, which at 13 cents would seem to be at their outright feasible limit. The BCE recently proposed elimination of the cut-back from transit revenues to municipal coffers on account of road upkeep; but that would have left the latter without any return on special and costly road maintenance. The proposal now for some rearrangement of running times, frequency of service and the like, may offer a compromise solution which would tide Greater Victoria over its present handicaps without undue impairment of service to be rendered.

Warning to Boat Owners

MENTION was made the other day of new federal regulations soon to be published in booklet form with respect to the operation of pleasure boats. It might save some boat operators an appearance in court, with the possibility of a fine, to point out that the mere fact that new rules are coming out does not in any degree absolve them from compliance with those now in force. In any case the effect of the amendments will be to stiffen the safety code—and for the best of reasons—not to do away with any of the present rules or make them easier.

It might be timely also to warn boat owners that all law enforcement officers—and that includes provincial game wardens and anyone who may be sworn in for special duty—have full authority to act under the small-craft sections of the Canada Shipping Act. A warden, for example, checking a boat for conformity with the game laws has authority and instructions to use it to "pinch" the owner if the boat itself is minus life jackets or anything else which the Shipping Act requires. Formerly administration of the federal regulations was the responsibility of Royal Canadian Mounted Police officers only, which made evasion of the rules all too easy for many of those foolish enough to believe that disregard of personal safety afloat was smart or unimportant.

With the boating season barely begun, some foolhardy operators of small boats already have been given stern warnings; and the word from the authorities is that the regulations in all respects will be enforced rigidly from now on, by means of prosecutions if necessary. Instead of harboring a sense of persecution, boat owners and parents of young people who speed over lakes and through tide rips should feel grateful for this official emphasis on safety.

The Peak Point

THE Biblical span is 70 years of age, although twentieth century medical science aims to raise that general limit. The half-way mark is therefore 35, when by logic man should be at the peak of his performance. Assuming that he builds up towards this turning point he should thereafter begin his decline.

Logic and men are not synonymous, of course. While in the matter of games the 35-year-old test holds good and an athlete may expect to be discarded at this age, in other realms men may only begin to flower as they enter the second half of the Biblical span. They may keep on sparkling until they are 70 and even more.

Yet in feats that call for a certain amount of drive and fine physical condition the general belief is that men are best equipped for adventure while in their twenties. The human machine is thought to be running then on all its cylinders. The choice of "space men" announced across the line as candidates for an orbit flight perhaps two years hence does not bear this out, however.

Seven service officers have been selected and their age range is significant, running as it does from 32 to 37 years of age. This narrow bracket cannot be accidental to other qualities. The choice suggests it is around the traditional half-way age mark that men have the maturity and resiliency of mind which coupled with physical resources make them most fit for such a stressful and perilous journey.

Logic does come into its own after all if this be so. Certainly the selection agrees with the theory that at the middle point in man's allotted span of life he is at the peak of his form.

Island Editors Say

Hugging the White Line

One of the most innocent habits of motorists is now looked upon as being a major contributing factor to accidents on our highways. The innocent habit consists merely of hugging the white line placed on highways for safety purposes, as a road divider and a guide when visibility is poor.

Too many motorists hug this line, with the result that those behind them cannot cut in on the outside right and take a chance by crossing the line and passing on the left.

—WEST COAST ADVOCATE

Snarled in Red Tape

Jurisdiction over the new Ladysmith boat basin is lost somewhere in the limbo of governmental red tape between the department of public works and the department of transport.

A telephone call to the public works department in Vancouver brought the information that that department turned the boat basin over to the department of transport on Feb. 1. A telephone call to the department of transport in Victoria revealed that that office has not yet received any word of the transfer.

—LADYSMITH CHRONICLE

Tired Santa Claus

We are more than a little disturbed at a suggestion made by B.C. Power Commission acting general manager R. C. McMordie before the Shrum Commission that residential power rates be increased eight per cent. Surely he does not include Vancouver Island Power Districts in this proposed hike.

There seems little doubt that the Commission needs more money to carry on its operation of electrifying the rural areas of the province. In our opinion there are only two avenues open to the government controlled utility: (a) direct subsidization from the consolidated revenue of the province, or (b) taking over the lucrative areas to help keep the budget balanced.

We are tired of playing Santa Claus.

—COURTENAY ARGUS

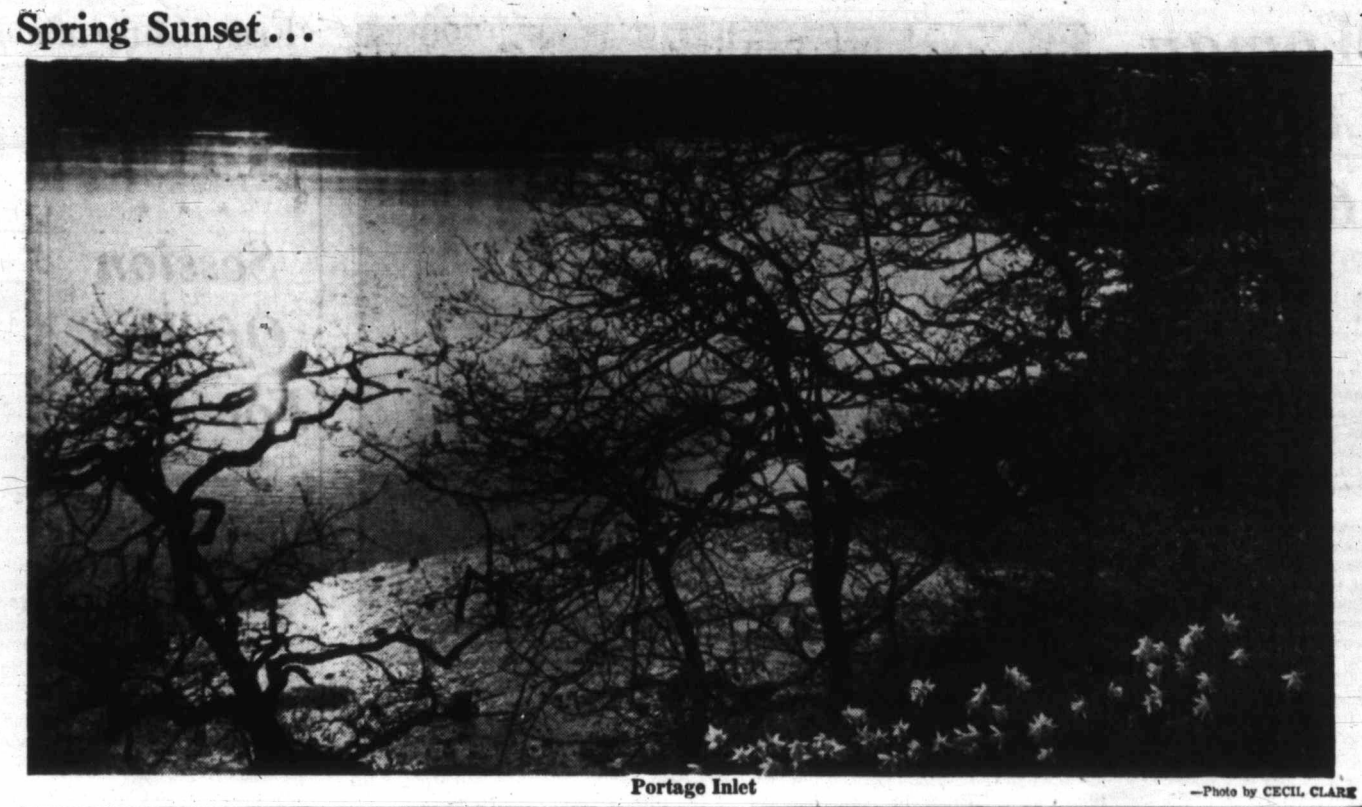
Responsibility Shirked

Central Saanich has already made a concrete move to provide water to the municipality. If this move should prove successful, then the municipal council has achieved for the district a benefit of almost priceless value.

In North Saanich the picture is different. There is no municipal council. The ratepayers of the district are wards of the government. They are wards of an unsympathetic government which appears reluctant to acknowledge its responsibilities to its wards. As long ago as 1936 it was established that the government is responsible for initiating a water supply to the dry communities, while the district is then responsible for its delivery to the properties within the area served. The provincial government has not acknowledged this responsibility.

—SIDNEY REVIEW

Spring Sunset...



Portage Inlet —Photo by CECIL CLARE

Thinking Aloud

". . . of shoes—and ships—and sealing wax—of cabbages and kings."

By TOM TAYLOR

VICTORIA is nicely represented in a recent issue, No. 6248, of the Illustrated London News by a feature display on University School. Four fine drawings by local artist Edward Goodall, one of them a double-page spread, depict the main buildings and playing fields, and a brief resume of the school's history is given. The feature is part of a series on "The Education of British Youth" and this is the first one to deal with a Canadian school.

The well-known illustrated journal gets over the difficulty of referring to a school whose type in England is called public and in Canada is called private, by citing the Mount Tolmie institution as an "independent school." A neat solution.

★ ★ ★

A dental magazine is quoted as saying that talkative persons are apt to suffer more teeth erosion than people who keep their mouths shut. The paper I saw the item in headlined this news as being rough on women, but I wonder. Men are not noticeably silent when gathered together and the hum of conversation at a stag dinner would, I feel sure, equal anything ever heard at the most chatterbox pink tea.

One hates to let one's side down but this is Sunday morning and the truth compels the admission that when it comes to loquacity the male seems well able to hold his own, and then some.

★ ★ ★

A reader telephoned last week to complain that the Union Jack atop the Memorial Arena was flying half-mast. I doubt anyone can be indicted for this however unless perhaps it be the designer of the flagpole. He is to blame. There are three flagstaffs above the Arena and they are peculiar in that each pole has a round disc similar to the truck about two feet from the top.

Why such an arrangement I wouldn't know, but I suppose this makes it difficult if not impossible to run the flag up to the normal position on the staff. Hence the half-mast look of the Union Jack.

★ ★ ★

Frank Lloyd Wright, as exuberant a showman as he was an architect, is cited in obituaries as having as a young man chosen "honest arrogance rather than hypocritical humility." With him it would be a case of not hiding his light. But all humble people are not hypocrites and to get away with arrogance one must have genius or at least unusual quality.

Even for genius arrogance is a questionable virtue, however, and some great men there have been who have not eschewed a touch of humility. What gives one a pain in the neck, of course, is an arrogant attitude on the part of someone who has nothing to be arrogant about. Victoria is not wholly free of this type either.

★ ★ ★

A correspondent who agrees that promotion and ballyhoo has a lot to do with putting mediocre songsters at the top of the hit parade, writes to say so and goes on:

"Yet once or twice lately it appeared that there was an improvement. Am I an optimist? For instance, John Raitt and Janet Blair (she can sing if she is allowed to). Could Perry Como sing an occasional song with some life in it? Some industries would fire a man who slept on the job. Do you think the restaurant public would welcome three minutes of piped music of a superior type followed by three minutes silence?"

I may be an optimist too but the juke boxes seem to be resting more of late, or perhaps I don't frequent the right restaurants. For myself silence without preceding music would be golden, if only because my feet are often at odds with my head and it's awkward drinking tea at one tempo and beating time to another.

NATO's 10th Anniversary

Curb to Soviet Aggression

By W. N. EWER, from London

THE current session of the NATO council in Washington is a "business" meeting. But it also marked the 10th anniversary of the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty on April 4, 1949.

It is, I think, wise to recall the circumstances in which the treaty came to be signed, and the organization to be created — especially since there has been much misunderstanding and much deliberate misrepresentation.

The story goes back a year, to the beginning of 1948. The policies and attitude of the Soviet government had become more and more hostile, more and more menacing. The Cominform had been set up. Large Russian armies were still under arms, while the Western powers had reduced their armed forces drastically since the end of the war. Russia was establishing control over all eastern Europe. And western Europe was practically defenceless.

It was Ernest Bevin who sounded the warning note. In the House of Commons on Jan. 22 he described the situation which was facing western Europe. The process, he pointed out, was "going on ruthlessly." Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary and Rumania had all been brought under effective Soviet control. "Information in our possession is that other attempts may be made elsewhere."

The information was correct. A month later came the Communist coup in Czechoslovakia. That country too became a Soviet satellite state.

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Bevin's proposal was that the countries of western Europe should unite, in what he called a Western Union, for mutual defence in the face of this growing danger. And he told the House he had just proposed consultations for such a purpose with the governments of France, Belgium, The Netherlands and Luxembourg.

That was the genesis of what, a year later, was to become the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Under the stimulus of events in Czechoslovakia, the Treaty of Brussels was signed in March. The five members bound themselves to come to each other's aid in the event of an armed attack upon any of them in Europe.

It should be noted that this was purely a European defensive organization. The United States had nothing to do with its inception. The American government's attitude was one of approval and moral support. It might have gone no further, for the dislike of foreign commitments was still very strong. But again a Soviet move was decisive. June, 1948, saw the Berlin blockade by which the Soviet government sought to force the three Western powers to withdraw their troops from Berlin and so allow the whole city to be annexed to the Soviet-controlled eastern Germany.

It was defeated by the "airlift." But it directly involved the United States. And it was a sharp warning that, as Bevin had said, the Soviet policy was "to use every means in their power to get Communist control in the west as well as in the east of Europe."

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The result was President Truman's decision to offer to join the countries of "western Europe" in a joint defensive organization. The Canadian government made the same decision. And in April, 1949, the North Atlantic Treaty was signed. Like its progenitor, it was strictly defensive in purpose, pledges of military aid coming into force only in the event of armed attack. Nor has it ever swerved from that.

The first task of the new alliance was to rebuild the dangerously depleted defence forces of its members, and to create in western Europe a new "integrated" defence system under a single command.

Since then, much has happened. The original members were the five "Western Union" countries and the U.S.A., Canada, Italy, Denmark, Norway, Iceland and Portugal. They have been joined by Greece, Turkey and, when it became an independent sovereign state, the German Federal Republic. Co-operation in defence has been extended to political co-operation. NATO, in its ten years of existence, has become a far more effective instrument of co-operation than most people foresaw in 1949.

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It has its faults and its weaknesses. But looking back one sees it has fulfilled the purpose for which it was originally created. That was to stem and check the tide of Soviet expansion which was then so imminent a danger to the West.

Russia, when NATO was formed, had annexed the Baltic republics and parts of Poland, Finland, Czechoslovakia and Rumania. She had brought under her overlordship Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria and established a firm grip on eastern Germany. It was the greatest expansion in peace time of any single power in Europe in all modern history.

But since the creation of NATO and the clear determination of its members to resist any further attempts to extend the Soviet empire in Europe, the process has been halted. No more countries have been, by one means or another, brought under Russian domination and Communist rule. That in itself is the historical justification of the North Atlantic Treaty.

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The dangers are not over. It is ominous that the 10th birthday of the organization should see another Berlin crisis. But one only has to ask oneself what would have happened in those 10 years if there had been no NATO, if the countries of western Europe had remained divided, unlinked with the United States, and themselves, in the face of vast Soviet military strength—as defenceless as the countries of eastern Europe had been.

Time Capsule . . . *By G. E. Mortimore*

Press Freedom Won

MANUEL QUEZON, president of the Senate of the Philippine Islands, passed through Victoria 25 years ago on his way home from Washington after a successful battle to win independence from United States colonial rule.

Before sailing for Manila aboard Ss. Empress of Canada, he told a Colonist reporter that he was pleased his homeland had won a promise of independence, in 10 years, through peaceful means. In earlier days he had been an armed rebel, against Spain and then against the U.S.A.

Two University of California students were seeking the Sasquatch, fabled hairy giants of the Harrison Lake, B.C., region.

★ ★ ★

BOTH British and German shipping lines were suffering from a depression in the shipping trade, 50 years ago.

The Cunard Line was unable to pay a dividend. Only 335,000 third class passengers had been carried to the United States in 1908 as against 1,116,000 the year before.

Ten thousand horsepower the year round was to be generated on the Jordan River by the B.C. Electric. The power plant would cost $2,000,000 at least. As soon as a definite settlement of the business relations between the company and the city had been reached, the construction would begin. The plan for the harnessing of the river involved at least five reservoirs, which would collect rain water to use as a reserve during dry periods.

E. J. Chamberlain, general manager of the Grand Trunk Pacific returned from an inspection trip to Prince Rupert townsite. He expressed his opinion that the city was "destined to be the greatest upon the Pacific coast."

The Princess Charlotte broke all records by steaming from Seattle to Victoria in three hours 14½ minutes —1½ minutes faster than the previous record. The Princess Victoria held the record for the Victoria-Vancouver trip.

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A BATTLE for freedom of the press was won 100 years ago.

Governor James Douglas, stung to anger by the constant needling of the British Colonist against his policies, revived an ancient English law and tacked a proclamation on the wall of the Hudson's Bay Company fort demanding that all newspaper publishers post bonds for good behavior.

For every day of "illegal" publication there was a fine of £50.

Publisher Amor de Cosmos of the Colonist learned of the existence of the proclamation the day before his paper (then a weekly) was to go to press. He had no money to spare for bonds. He decided to obey the law, and not publish.

A copy of the British Colonist for April 2, 1859, appears in the Colonist's bound file, but the paper has two blank pages and apparently was never distributed to the public.

By the following Saturday, April 9, 1859, the Colonist was able to report that a meeting of aroused citizens, jealous of freedom of the press, had subscribed £800 to provide surety.

That was the only time in its 100-year history when the Colonist missed publication.

—FROM COLONIST FILES

The Packsack

Of GREGORY CLARK

THIS being Library Week across Canada, during which attention is being attracted in city, town and village to the local libraries with the slogan "Wake Up and Read," it will occur to many people to have a look at their own private book collections. They are libraries too.

But most private libraries today are merely decorative storage shelves for books bought, read and finished with. They are features of interior decoration, and are given place in the modern house, as are certain other articles of conventional furnishings, for appearance and not for use.

Why would you read most modern books more than once?

Then why keep them?

The thing to do in Library Week is to go right now and get a couple of empty cartons from the cellarway, take them to your book shelves, fill them with all the books you are keeping for no good reason at all, never to be touched again until you die.

Then set these cartons in a handy closet, ready to be loaded in your car the first trip you make to your summer cottage or favorite resort. And in the last village, seek out the parson, or the doctor, or the good woman anybody will tell you is the visitor of the sick.

They will know what to do with your books. Your library will have become a library.